

**In the Abstract:**

Please amend the abstract of the present application, as follows:

A method of [prevent dishing of large area feature] protecting a peripheral region, by forming a protective mask over the peripheral area, during polysilicon [CMP] polishing while forming [enables the use of] self-aligned [CMP] polysilicon gates in flash memory circuits. [A protective mask is formed over peripheral large area features during poly CMP.] In one aspect, the protective mask is formed over a substantial area of the peripheral region. In another aspect, the protective mask is formed over a substantial area of an active part of the peripheral region.